

Gulf of Mexico: 2016 Red Snapper Recreational Seasons and Approval of Final Rule to Reallocate Commercial and Recreational Catch Limits

Frequently Asked Questions

April 2016



What are the 2016 federal red snapper recreational season dates/lengths?

- The recreational sector fishing for red snapper is divided into two components
 - The private angling component,
 - The federally permitted for-hire component.
- The federal seasons for both components begin on **June 1, 2016, at 12:01 a.m., local time.**
- The closing dates are:
 - Private angling component: **June 10, 2016, at 12:01 a.m., local time.**
 - Federally permitted for-hire component: **July 17, 2016, at 12:01 a.m., local time.**
- The two components were established through Amendment 40 to the fishery management plan in 2015.
- For more information on Amendment 40, go to http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/gulf_fisheries/reef_fish/2013/am40/index.html.

How did NOAA Fisheries project the season lengths?

- NOAA Fisheries used the annual catch targets for the different components and past fishing conditions to project 2016 season lengths.
- State red snapper fishing seasons were also factored into the projections.
- After accounting for harvests in state waters, NOAA Fisheries projected a federal private angler season of 9 days to harvest the annual catch target.
- NOAA Fisheries projected the 2016 federally permitted for-hire red snapper annual catch target to be harvested in 46 days.
- For information on red snapper recreational management in the Gulf of Mexico including how the season length projections were made, go to: http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/gulf_fisheries/red_snapper/index.html.

What does Amendment 28 do?

- Reallocate the Gulf of Mexico red snapper stock annual catch limit between the recreational and commercial sectors of the reef fish fishery.
- Based on the reallocation, the final rule sets the 2016 and 2017 red snapper commercial and recreational quotas.
- Based on the new recreational quotas, the rule sets the 2016 and 2017 federally permitted for-hire and private angling component sub-quotas.
- The rule also sets the 2016 and 2017 recreational sector and respective recreational component annual catch targets.

Definitions

Annual Catch Limits are the amount of fish that can be harvested from the stock each year. Note: For red snapper, quotas are considered the same as annual catch limits

Annual catch target is the acceptable level of landings that provide a buffer, if needed, for management uncertainty.

What is the new red snapper allocation?

- Amendment 28 reallocates 2.5 percent of the stock annual catch limit from the commercial sector to the recreational sector.
- The resulting commercial and recreational quotas are based on the new 48.5:51.5 percent allocation of the stock annual catch limit rather than the old 51:49 percent allocation.

What was the rationale for changing the allocation?

- To reallocate the red snapper harvest consistent with the 2014 red snapper update assessment.
- To ensure the allowable catch and recovery benefits from a rebuilding population are fairly and equitably allocated between commercial and recreational fishermen.

What are the quotas and annual catch targets for 2016 and 2017?

- Table 1 shows the 2016 and 2017 quotas and annual catch targets.

Table 1. Gulf of Mexico red snapper 2016 and 2017 commercial and recreational quotas, recreational annual catch targets, and recreational federal for-hire and private angling component quotas and annual catch targets. Note the quotas and annual catch targets are in millions of pounds whole weight.

Sector or component	Quota		Annual catch target	
	2016	2017	2016	2017
Commercial	6.768	6.664	---	---
Recreational	7.192	7.076	5.754	5.661
Federal for-hire	3.042	2.993	2.434	2.395
Private angling	4.150	4.083	3.320	3.266

How did the Council determine how to divide the stock red snapper annual catch limit between the commercial and recreational sectors?

- The new allocation was based on changes in how the recreational catch is estimated.
- The red snapper annual catch limit was calculated using both the old and new recreational catch estimates.
- The new recreational catch estimates were higher because of changes in methodology.
- The higher catch estimates resulted in higher annual catch limit estimates from the stock assessment.
- The difference between the two red snapper annual catch limits was then added to the recreational quota.
- The result was a 2.5 percent shift in allocation from the commercial fishery to the recreational fishery.

Additional information on Amendment 28

- You may obtain electronic copies of Amendment 28 and the final rule from the NOAA Fisheries Web site: http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/gulf_fisheries/reef_fish/2013/am28/index.html or the e-Rulemaking Portal: www.regulations.gov.